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Farmers Anticipate Bumper Crops If Lady Luck Smiles

(By Roger Babson)
Eureka, Kans., April 23.—American farmers last year grossed some thirty billion dollars—the peak in a series of phenomenally prosperous years. Will their good luck hold out in 1948?
This year's toboggan in farm prices, which later managed a good recovery, failed to uproot the confidence of farmers in the soundness of current economic conditions in this country. They are getting set to reap another golden harvest, if their March planting intentions may be taken as a criterion. According to the official government report farmers expect to plant a larger total acreage of principal crops this year than in any of the past three seasons.
What will be the final results of these good intentions, I do not profess to know. Much depends upon climatic conditions in the weeks to come. They have been generally favorable thus far, although the South has had a little too much rain. Since about as many persons were at work on farms on March 1, this year as last, the labor problem ought not prove too difficult. Supplies of farm machinery and fertilizer are more plentiful, and any other factors should not seriously interfere with farm operations.

Bumper Crops Possible
Planting intentions are one thing; final yields another. The promised far-flung fields of waving wheat and ripening corn are not yet garnered into elevators and cribs. Nevertheless, on the basis of average yields, some interesting results are possible. Production of all wheat, for instance, could reach 1,110,000,000 bushels, compared with last year's record of 1,364,919,000 bushels and the ten-year average of 890,306,000 bushels. That would be a lot of wheat by any standard. Corn could chalk up a total of around three billion bushels—well above the ten-year average and last year's short crop of 2,400,952,000 bushels. The oats out-turn could ring the bell at 1,378,000,000 bushels, which would be 13 percent above the 1947 crop and 11 percent the ten-year average.

The major uncertain factor in the over-all crop production outlook this year, as always, is weather. Since I am no weather prophet, I cannot speak authoritatively on that subject. I do know however, that the wrong kind of weather during the critical growing periods can quickly change a bright crop picture into an extreme dismal affair. I believe it is more important this year than usual for all buyers and sellers of farm commodities to keep a watchful eye on weather conditions from now on. They may well be the clue to profitable timing of purchases or the sale of farm products in the months ahead.
Can farmers this year reasonably expect to get good prices for their wheat, corn and other? Here, again, uncertainty enters the picture. It does seem to me, however, if present crop indications are borne out, especially as regards wheat, that agricultural prices in general are likely to move still lower, despite any intermediate upturns that may result from crop scares or other temporary factors.

Do not forget that European crops are reported to be making generally favorable progress. Good crops in Europe this year would materially lessen dependence upon imports of American grain and other foodstuffs. Should some untoward event precipitate war with Russia next year, exports of grains and food products to Europe could largely cease. Lessened foreign demand would put some hard pressure on United States farm prices.

Good Farm Year
Nevertheless, I do not expect the bottom to fall out, whatever happens. Domestic demand will continue unusually large, since employment and wages should hold at high levels. In any event, the government is committed to support agricultural prices at ninety percent of parity a level that would assure farmers a fair return for their work and products.

All in all, the odds, in my opinion, favor another good year for American farmers in 1948. Although they are tightening their purse strings a bit at present, they should prove good but wise spenders when 1948 crops are in. Merchants should prepare now to make the most of profitable farm markets.

CREDITORS' NOTICE
All persons having claims against the estate of William J. Bailey, deceased, are hereby notified to file the same, duly verified, with the undersigned, and those indebted to said estate will please make payment likewise.

ROBERT M. VANCE,
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April 20, 1948.—6-3c.

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Interesting Closing Program Announced At Bell Street School

Closing exercises at Bell Street school began last night with a mystery comedy, "The Green Light," presented by the dramatic club.
Friday afternoon from 3 to 6 p.m. the program will be continued with May Day activities.

Monday, May 10, at 8 p.m., the sixth and seventh grades will present "Creeping Shadows"; Friday, the 14th, the primary department will present "Cinderella in Flowerland."

May 19 the fourth and fifth grades will present "Streamlined Cinderella"; May 21, the eighth and ninth grades will give the program, "Great Day"; and on the 24th "The Sunshine Twins" will be presented by members of the 10th grade.

On Sunday, May 23, at 3:30 in the afternoon, the annual sermon will be preached by Dr. J. E. Briggs, professor of education and philosophy at Benedict college, Columbia.

The week's program will be concluded on the evening of May 26 with a farce-in-three acts, "Too Many Relatives," by members of the 11th grade.

The public is invited to attend the exercises.

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Laurens To Secure Full Time Secretary For Chamber Commerce

Says The Laurens Advertiser:
At a called meeting of the Laurens Chamber of Commerce held last Thursday night, a motion was almost unanimously adopted in favor of employing a paid secretary and a second motion created a steering committee to map a program for funds and direct a canvas.

The steering committee is to be composed of W. R. McCuen, Jr., W. H. Harley, Gilbert Roberson, Alison Lee, W. T. Bolt, L. H. Taylor and L. C. Barksdale, the present secretary who serves on a part-time basis. This is the same committee appointed at the March meeting to make a survey of towns the size of Laurens already employing full-time secretaries.

Plans outlined at the meeting, which had to be tentative for technical reasons, call for an increase in the membership of the body and an increase in the dues from \$16 to \$25 a year.

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Notice of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
The Laurens county group of Alcoholics Anonymous meets every Tuesday evening at 8:30 over Sumerel's store in Laurens.

Anyone who has a sincere desire to rid himself or herself of a drinking problem is cordially invited to attend these meetings, or write

Box 215
Laurens, S. C.
for an interview or information.

The size of the budget and the method to be followed in obtaining new members and increased dues was left to the discretion of the steering committee which is to report back on its accomplishments.
During the course of the evening, it was decided to dispense with supper meetings after the May meeting which will be ladies' night.



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